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(47)

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16 September 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: J. Kenneth McDonald  
Chief, History Staff

SUBJECT: Donovan/OSS Symposium Address

1. I'll attach my draft concluding sections for your Donovan/OSS Symposium keynote address this Friday, 19 September. I think I've covered the topics we agreed on last Friday. The section titles are from the proposed outline I sent along with the first installment.

2. I've made a few revisions and corrections on the draft opening section that I gave you Friday, and the revised edition is also attached. This represents part one, "Introduction," on my outline.

3. If I can be of help in editing the middle section I trust you'll let me know.

STAT

J. Kenneth McDonald

Attachments

Distribution:-

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## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Donovan/OSS Symposium Address

FROM: J. Kenneth McDonald  
Chief, History Staff  
316 Ames Bldg.

EXTENSION

NO.

ER 4127X 86

DATE

12 September 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

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12 SEP 1986

Jel

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Director of  
Central Intelligence

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12 September 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: J. Kenneth McDonald  
Chief, History Staff

SUBJECT: Donovan/OSS Symposium Address

1. I'll attach a draft opening section for your keynote address to the Donovan/OSS Symposium next Friday, 19 September. I've tried to put the information about the released OSS records in the context of the symposium's objectives.

2. I'll also attach an outline of my own conception of the speech, which I hope is not too far afield from what you have in mind. In any event, it shows my idea of how the attached draft section and the material I'm preparing on the legacy of OSS to CIA might fit into your address.

3. I'll complete the section of the OSS legacy this weekend, and have it for you Monday. I would be glad to work on any other section of the address where I might be useful.

STAT

J. Kenneth McDonald

Attachments

12 September 1986

Keynote Address to Donovan/OSS Symposium

Friday, 19 September 1986

It is a great pleasure to be here this morning, to help launch this symposium on General William Donovan and the Office of Strategic Services that he created. It promises to be an extraordinary two days of reunion, discussion and learning. It was a wonderful inspiration on Max Corvo's part to organize this occasion. We all owe Max and his distinguished symposium committee enthusiastic thanks for their success in making this meeting a reality. It is an unprecedented opportunity for all of us who served in OSS to survey and assess both what has been done and what needs to be done to establish a faithful historical record of the World War II accomplishments of OSS and General Donovan.

In fact, our theme can be stated as the wish to promote a more accurate record and a fuller understanding of the role and achievements of OSS in World War II. In thinking about this symposium I decided that one good way to organize our recollections and judgments on OSS is to look at three aspects of its history. These can be stated in three questions.

First, how and why OSS was created?

Second, what did OSS contribute to the U.S. victory in World War II?

Third, what is the legacy of OSS to CIA?

Before I give some partial and personal answers to these very large and important questions, however, I want first to say something about how I think we should go about our work, and then something about where we should look for information. That is, I want to say something about the methods and sources that this historical effort demands.

Since this is both a reunion and an historical symposium, it won't always be easy to distinguish between the two. We all have a rich fund of war stories to tell, and if we are willing to listen to some in return we may get a chance to tell them. In this, of course, I'm grateful for the chance to speak to you all at the outset for the better part of an hour without (I hope) interruption. But while we will reminisce as old comrades, we are at the same time undertaking a serious search for a more accurate record of the work of General Donovan and OSS. We have to be patient with each other, and recognize that both here and in the historical work already done on OSS there is a wide range of opinion and interpretation. There is an enormous amount of research yet to be done on the history of OSS, and as I'll explain in a moment, the most important sources for that history are only now becoming available. We should therefore recognize that we are going to disagree among ourselves, and even after two days' lively debate these proceedings will not produce final answers to the questions of how OSS came to be created, what it did in the war, and how its experience has influenced the development of American intelligence since then.

As veterans of a great intelligence organization we all recognize that our first priority must be to collect the facts. In this first symposium one of the most useful things we can do is to identify the main gaps in our knowledge of OSS. Only when we identify the work needed for a more accurate

historical record of OSS can we hope for a fuller understanding of its role and achievements in World War II.

Having talked about our methods, I would also like to say something about the sources that we need to build an accurate historical record of OSS. First, we have the recollections of those who worked for General Donovan in his great organization. I think that we all, as Veterans of the OSS, have a duty to record recollections of our service. I have been doing some writing about OSS, and I urge all of you to gather your thoughts and to put an account of your OSS service on paper or on tape. The facilities for tape recording that have been arranged at this symposium offer you an opportunity to begin this effort. Recording your own experience will be your own personal contribution to forming a more accurate historical record of OSS.

We do not have to rely only on our recollections, however. OSS was an extraordinarily well-documented organization. There are a lot of private papers around, and in the past year the U.S. Army's Military History Institute at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, has opened up the papers of General Donovan himself to researchers. While this valuable collection includes some microfilm of the wartime Director's office files, the papers naturally mainly focus on General Donovan and not on OSS. The truth is that comprehensive and thoroughly documented studies of the history of OSS can't be done without substantial research in its official wartime records. Until recently, however, most of these records were still classified, and researchers had no access to them except through the Freedom of Information Act. I'm glad to be able to report, however, that these records--around 4000 cubic feet of them--have nearly all now been declassified, transferred



to the National Archives and Records Administration, and opened to the public for research.

Let me explain how the OSS records--which we here helped create in World War II--made their way to the National Archives. When President Truman dissolved OSS at the end of September 1945, X-2, counterintelligence, and SI, Secret Intelligence, went to the War Department, where they formed the Army's Strategic Services Unit, SSU. At the same time, Dr. William Langer's Research and Analysis Branch went to the Department of State, which then transferred R&A's wartime files to the National Archives in 1946. In 1972, at the National Archives' request, CIA organized a team OSS veterans who reviewed and declassified these OSS R&A Branch records. By 1978, the National Archives had opened over 900 cubic feet--that is, about 23 million pages--of declassified R&A files for research.

Although the R&A records are a major resource, their information on OSS operations is sketchy and incidental. For lack of better sources some authors have attempted to use them for operational or general OSS history, but they are not really very helpful for those purposes. Comprehensive studies of OSS really only become possible with the opening of the much larger collection of OSS operational records, which went to the War Department when SSU joined the Army in 1945. CIG, the Central Intelligence Group, which was formed in January 1946, absorbed SSU--and the OSS records--later that year, and in September 1947 CIG was transformed into the Central Intelligence Agency. Having traveled in two years from OSS to SSU to CIG to CIA, the OSS operational records then remained in CIA's custody, classified and closed to the public, for over 35 years. In early 1979, however, after a National Archives appraisal, CIA formed another team of

retired officers, again mostly OSS veterans, who spent four years reviewing these records. Although they were able to declassify over 94% of these files, problems in deciding on access rules delayed the records' transfer to the National Archives. In 1983 I asked CIA's Chief Historian to see what could be done to release this collection. After careful negotiations, CIA's first increment of OSS operational records was opened to researchers at the National Archives in June 1984. I'm glad to report that this transfer is nearing completion, and that over 2200 cubic feet of records--which would be a stack of archives boxes over a half a mile high--have already been transferred. The addition of the operational OSS records to the R&A files already open at the National Archives forms a massive collection, which will eventually make over more than 100 million pages of OSS records available for historical research.

To give you an idea of what's in these OSS operational records, the first batch that the National Archives opened to the public in 1984 included war diaries and the history of OSS in London; reports of Special Forces (including the Jedburgh Teams) infiltrated behind enemy lines; intelligence reports from OSS stations in Rome, Caserta, Stockholm, Singapore and Burma; Secret Intelligence operations files; the Operation Group command file; and General Donovan's own records from the Office of the Director. Some of you may have seen articles that such papers as the Detroit News, Washington Times, and Christian Science Monitor ran when these OSS records were first opened to the public in 1984. The Washington Post printed several of the more than 60 Saul Steinberg propaganda cartoons found in the records of Morale Operations, and also reported that MO had apparently violated copyright laws in translating popular American songs into German so that

Marlene Dietrich could sing them on clandestine OSS broadcasts to Hitler's Germany. The Christian Science Monitor did a piece on John E. Taylor, the archivist who presides over all these OSS records at the National Archives. John Taylor, I should note, knows more about these records than anyone else anywhere. He gladly shares this knowledge, to help researchers find what they are looking for in this vast collection. I owe him thanks for his help over the years, and I suspect that every other researcher in OSS records is similarly indebted to him.

Since virtually all of the official OSS records are now or soon will be available to researchers, we can expect a growing number of serious and scholarly historical books and articles to be based upon them. The OSS records are, in fact, among the most heavily used collections at the National Archives. All of this is to say that the history of OSS, now that the original official records are available, has become a major growth industry in the historical profession.

10 September 1986

Keynote Address to OSS/Donovan Symposium  
Friday, 19 September 1986

Proposed Outline

1. Introduction

- A. Thanks and tribute to organizers
- B. Symposium theme and objective
  - 1. An accurate historical record
  - 2. A serious assessment of OSS
- C. Outline of remarks
  - 1. Donovan and OSS origins & formation
  - 2. OSS contribution to war effort
  - 3. OSS legacy to CIA
- D. Survey of sources available for history of OSS
  - 1. Personal recollections and papers
  - 2. Official records now available

2. General Donovan & Formation of OSS

- A. Background: Donovan's career before COI
- B. Origins & formation of COI, 1940-41
- C. Formation of OSS, 1942: Mission and Organization
  - 1. Relationship to other US intelligence organizations
  - 2. JCS jurisdiction
  - 3. British influence

3. OSS Contribution to War Effort

- A. Opportunities & constraints
  - 1. British role: Model, Training and Cooperation
  - 2. No cryptological role (MAGIC & ULTRA)
  - 3. Deployment abroad (British areas: Europe & SE Asia)  
No Pacific role (Nimitz & MacArthur)
  - 4. JCS scepticism of OSS role in total war
- B. Survey of theaters & components
  - 1. Headquarters & R&A
  - 2. Southeast Asia & China
  - 3. North Africa & Europe

4. OSS Legacy to CIA

A. End of OSS in 1945

1. Donovan's postwar planning 1944-45
2. Disposition of R&A, X-2 and SI
3. Formation of CIG 1946

B. Formation of CIA 1947

C. OSS contributions to CIA

1. Model: 4 years of central intelligence
2. Organization: CA, espionage & estimates in one organization
3. Personnel: training ground
4. Tradition & esprit

5. Conclusion